

REMARKS

Claims 1-19 are pending. Reconsideration and allowance based on the below comments are respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-19 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Lee (U.S. Patent No. 6,212,553). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, an information history list display section for displaying communication history in connection with answering state, whether answer has been completed or not, of the respective communications based on history related information.

Claim 9 recites, *inter alia*, personal information management section for transmitting, in response to a request from an information terminal that displays respective communications which belong to each of the information terminal users, and a connection with an answering state, whether answer has been completed or not, of the respective communications based on history related information.

Claims 13 and 17 recite, *inter alia*, recording history related information which is generated by outgoing or incoming communication and indicates an answering state, whether answer has been completed or not, of the respective communications.

Claim 18 recites, *inter alia*, maintaining a record of communication history information indicating an answering state, whether answer has been

completed or not, of each item wherein said communication history information being generated from a plurality of different types of communication.

In each of the above claims, history information relating to a communication is displayed and/or recorded in connection with an answering state. The answering state allows a user to know whether he has replied (answered) to the communication or not. Thus, the user knows instantly if he has responded to a particular communication.

In contrast, Lee teaches an electronic mail system that allows recipients of mail to respond to an email sent by a user and the user (sender) to view the responses to his request. The Office Action references Figs. 14, 35 and 36 and the corresponding text as teaching applicant's claimed answering state. The Examiner asserts on page 3 of the Office Action in the footnote, that "the meaning of 'answering state' is considered as really a 'processing state' as taught on page 4, lines 1-3 of applicant's specification. Due to the Examiner's interpretation of the term 'answering state' the Examiner thus considers the state of an email whether it is processed or not as corresponding to the claimed 'answering state'." Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner's interpretation is incorrect.

Page 4, lines 1-3 of the specification refers to a processing state of history information. The processing state is one of various state communications. The answering state is a actual reply performed by the user to a particular communication. The answering state is not, as the Examiner considers, a state

of whether an email or other communication has been processed or not. The answering state has a direct relation to the user and whether the user has replied to a communication or not.

There is a distinct difference between what Lee teaches and what is claimed by applicants. In Lee's mail system a user sends a request and can view whether recipients of the request have responded and in what manner. The "Y" and "N" in Figs. 14 and 35 indicate whether the recipient of a users request have read the emails request. They do not indicate whether they have answered the email request. It is possible in Lee's system to mark the "read" column as "Y" without providing an answer or in the alternative providing an answer but one that is not indicated in the list view. Lee states that "messages without a message flag do not include any mark in the 'status' column." See column 23, lines 52-59. Thus, if a message does not have a flag, it is unclear whether an answer is completed or not, or if an answer has been provided at all and only the message read by a recipient.

Further, the user in Lee's system is not the focus, it is the recipients of the communication on which a focus is directed in determining whether they have answered the users request.

In the present invention, the user is the focus. When a user receives a communication, the embodiments of the present invention keep track of whether the user has answered this communication. This allows the user to know if he or she needs to respond to a communication during a quick glance

at the communication information. Also, in the present invention, an answering state, whether an answer has been completed or not, is displayed or recorded with the communication history. A user always knows whether he has replied (answered) to a communication or not.

Thus, in view of the above, the Examiner's interpretation of the claimed terms is inaccurate. Further, Lee does not teach the claimed features, particularly the use of an answering state in conjunction with the communication history whether the answer has been completed or not, as recited in the claims. Therefore, each and every feature of the claims as required under 35 U.S.C. §102 is not taught by Lee. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Conclusion

For at least these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1-19 are distinguishable over the cited art. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

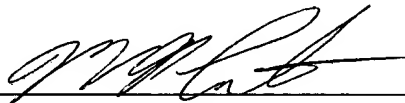
Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Chad J. Billings (Reg. No. 48,917) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

Appl. No. 09/881,728

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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